



Whistleblowing Policy

Purpose

The University is committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. It seeks to conduct its affairs with honesty and integrity and in a responsible manner, taking into account the requirements of the funding bodies and the seven principles of public life, also known as the Nolan Principles. However, all organisations face the risk of things going wrong from time to time, or of unknowingly harbouring illegal or unethical conduct. A culture of openness and accountability is essential in order to prevent such situations occurring and to address them when they do occur.

This Policy sets out the University's response to the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1988 (as amended) "PIDA". The aims of this Policy are:

- a) To encourage individuals to report suspected wrongdoing as soon as possible, in the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as appropriate, and that their confidentiality will be respected.
- b) To provide individuals with guidance as to how to raise those concerns.
- c) To reassure those making disclosure that they are able to raise genuine concerns without fear of reprisals, even if they turn out to be mistaken.

Where an individual discovers information that they believe indicates that wrongdoing may occur or has already occurred within the University then this information should be appropriately disclosed, confidentially, within the terms of this Policy, without fear of consequences. The University encourages such disclosures, which enables the University to grow, learn, make improvements and prevent or mitigate against any future harm. The University will protect those who come forward under the terms of this Policy.

Responsibility

The Audit Committee has overall responsibility for this Policy, and for reviewing the effectiveness of actions taken in response to concerns raised under this Policy.

The Designated Person has day-to-day operational responsibility for this Policy, and must ensure that all managers and other staff (including procuring that managers and other staff at the Student Union) who may deal with concerns or investigations under this policy receive regular and appropriate training.

All staff and students are responsible for the success of this Policy and should ensure that they use it to disclose any suspected danger or wrongdoing. Staff and students are invited to comment on this Policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved. Comments, suggestions and queries should be addressed to the Designated Person or any other key contact listed at the end of this Policy.

Scope

This Policy applies equally to:

- Employees of the University
- Agency workers
- Self-employed people/contractors/other workers working for the University in any capacity
- Students
- Members of the Board of Governors

This Policy is therefore designed to allow all members of the University to express genuine concern and disclose information at an appropriate level.

This Policy does not form part of any employee's Contract of Employment or Student Contract and may be amended at any time.

What is Whistleblowing?

Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrong doing or dangers within the University. These concerns may include:

- failure to comply with financial obligations or allegations of fraud
- failure to comply with a legal obligation or with the Rules and Regulations of the University
- actions which endanger the health or safety of any individual or to the environment
- criminal activity
- miscarriages of justice
- bribery contrary to the University's Bribery Act Compliance Statement and Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy Statement
- facilitating tax evasion contrary to the University's Criminal Finances Act 2017 statement
- attempts to conceal any of the above.

A **whistleblower** is a person who raises a genuine concern relating to any of the above. If any member of staff or student has any genuine concerns related to suspected wrongdoing or danger affecting any of the activities of the University (a **whistleblowing concern**) then you should report it under this Policy.

This Policy should not be used for complaints relating to an individual's own personal circumstances, such as treatment at work/as part of studies. In those cases the individual should follow the University's Grievance Procedure, Dignity at Work Procedure or Student Complaints Procedure as appropriate.

If an individual is unsure as to whether something is within the scope of this Policy they should seek advice from the Designated Person.

How to make a disclosure

The University hopes that in many cases you will be able to raise any concerns with your line manager/personal tutor/University contact. You may tell them in person or put the matter in writing if you prefer. They may be able to agree a way of resolving your concern quickly and effectively. In some cases they may refer the matter to the Designated Person.

However, where the matter is more serious, or you feel that your line manager/personal tutor/University contact has not addressed your concern, or you prefer not to raise it with them for any reason, you should make your disclosure, ideally in writing or verbally if you prefer, to the Designated Person or any of the other individuals whose contact details appear at the end of this Policy.

Relevant contact details appear at the end of this Policy.

Confidentiality

The University hopes that individuals will feel able to voice whistleblowing concerns openly under this Policy. However, if an individual wishes to raise a concern confidentially, it will make every effort to keep that person's identity secret. If it is necessary for anyone investigating the concern to know that person's identity, this will be discussed with the person who has raised the concern.

The University does not encourage individuals to make disclosures anonymously. Proper investigation may be more difficult or impossible if the University cannot obtain further information from the person who has made the disclosure. It is also more difficult to establish whether any allegations are credible. Those making disclosures who are concerned about possible reprisals if their identity is revealed should come forward to the Designated Person (or one of those other contacts listed at the end of this Policy) and appropriate measures can then be taken to preserve confidentiality. If an individual is in any doubt, advice can be sought from Protect, the independent whistleblowing charity, who offer a confidential helpline, and contact details are included at the end of this Policy.

Investigation and Outcome

After a concern has been raised under this Policy an initial assessment will be carried out.

This initial assessment will consider whether the disclosure falls within the scope of this Policy.

If the disclosure falls within the scope of the Policy, a decision will be taken as to next steps, including on whether a formal investigation is necessary. An investigation will depend on the nature of the matter raised and may involve:

- an internal investigation conducted by an independent senior member of the University or by the University's external auditors.
- a paper based exercise by the Designated Person or other key contact listed below or other nominated person and/or
- referral to an appropriate external person (eg police if the matter involves allegations of criminal activity).

The initial assessment may also result in referring the matter to another University procedure or determining that the matter has already been dealt with pursuant to an alternative procedure.

The person making the disclosure will be informed of the outcome of this assessment. The person making the disclosure may be required to attend a meeting or meetings in order to provide further information.

If an investigator or team of investigators is appointed, the investigator(s) may make recommendations to the Audit Committee for change to enable the University to learn from the experience and avoid/mitigate against any future wrongdoing or harm, and may also refer the matter to an alternative University procedure depending on the outcome of the investigation and/or wrongdoing uncovered, including the University's Disciplinary Procedure and/or Student Code of Conduct.

The University will aim to keep the person who makes the disclosure informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. However, sometimes the need for confidentiality may prevent the University from giving the individual specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. The person making the disclosure should treat any information about the investigation as confidential.

If it is concluded that a person making a disclosure has made false allegations maliciously, that person will be subject to disciplinary action.

If the person making the disclosure is not satisfied

While the University cannot always guarantee the outcome an individual is seeking, it will try to deal with the concern fairly and in an appropriate way. By using this Policy individuals can help the University to achieve this.

If an individual is not satisfied with the way in which their concern has been handled, this can be raised with one of the other key contacts listed at the end of this Policy. Contact details are set out at the end of this Policy.

External disclosures

The aim of this Policy is to provide an internal mechanism for reporting, investigating and remedying any wrongdoing. In most cases individuals should not find it necessary to alert anyone externally.

The law recognises that in some circumstances it may be appropriate to report concerns to an external body such as a regulator. It will very rarely if ever be appropriate to alert the media. We strongly encourage you to seek advice before reporting a concern to anyone external. The independent whistleblowing charity, Protect, operates a confidential helpline, and contact details are included at the end of this Policy. They also have a list of prescribed regulators for reporting certain types of concern.

Protection and support for whistleblowers

It is understandable that those considering making a disclosure are sometimes worried about possible repercussions. The University aims to encourage openness and will support those who raise genuine concerns under this Policy, even if they turn out to be mistaken. This Policy is designed to offer protection to those members of the University who disclose concerns under this Policy.

If any staff or students subject anyone who makes a disclosure under this Policy to any harm, this will be taken extremely seriously and such member of staff or student may be subject to disciplinary action under the University's Disciplinary Procedure or Student Code of Conduct .

Contact details

Role	Contact
Designated Person Chief Operating Officer	Email: chiefoperatingofficer@mmu.ac.uk Post: Chief Operating Officer, Ormond Building, Lower Ormond Street, Manchester, M15 6BX
Vice-Chancellor	Email: vice-chancellor@mmu.ac.uk Post: Vice Chancellor, Manchester Metropolitan University, Ormond Building, Lower Ormond Street, Manchester, M15 6BX
The Chair of the Board of Governors	Email: s.duffy@mmu.ac.uk Post: Chair of Board of Governors, Manchester Metropolitan University, Ormond Building, Lower Ormond Street, Manchester, M15 6BX
The Chair of the Audit Committee	Email: auditcommitteechair@mmu.ac.uk Post: Chair of Audit Committee, Manchester Metropolitan University, Ormond Building, Lower Ormond Street, Manchester, M15 6BX
Director of Legal Services	Email: c.hilton@mmu.ac.uk Post: Director of Legal Services, Manchester Metropolitan University, All Saints Building, Grosvenor Square, Manchester, M15 6BH
Deputy Director of Finance	Email: p.davenport@mmu.ac.uk Post: Deputy Director of Finance, Manchester Metropolitan University, All Saints Building, Grosvenor Square, Manchester, M15 6BH
Assistant Director – Financial Control	Email: a.clare@mmu.ac.uk Post: Assistant Director – Financial Control, Manchester Metropolitan University, All Saints Building, Grosvenor Square, Manchester, M15 6BH
Protect	External whistleblowing charity: https://protect-advice.org.uk / 020 3117 2520

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